



"Projections are that 'time in vehicles' in Delaware will grow by another 35 percent by 2020. In the past 16 years, there has been a 70 percent increase in driving, primarily because people are driving farther and taking more trips."

— Anne P. Canby

in the mornings and southbound vehicles in the afternoons. The construction on Route 13 was completed on Friday, Dec. 17, and all four northbound and southbound lanes, as well as the 1,400-foot turn lane are now open to traffic. Construction on northbound SR-1 between the Biddles Corner toll plaza and the C&D Canal Bridge will be completed by the end of January, weather permitting.

When construction of the final Odessa-to-Smyrna section of SR-1 is completed in 2003, the entire highway from Tybouts Corner to south of Dover Air Force Base will be more than 40 miles long, and will have cost nearly \$1 billion to build. The state's share of the construction and operating costs for 35.2 miles of SR-1 will be approximately \$795 million; the 5 1/2 miles of the C&D Canal Bridge and its approaches were totally funded by the Army Corps of Engineers. There will be a total of two toll plazas on SR-1, at Biddles Corner and Dover (there will be no toll plaza on the Odessa-to-Smyrna section to open in 2003).

The \$1 toll for two-axle vehicles at each plaza was established based on three factors: the \$795 million cost to the state for construction of SR-1, the projected number of vehicles that will pay tolls at both the Biddles Corner and Dover plazas in the coming years, and how long it would take to pay the state's share of the project based on various potential toll rates. Using that formula, it was determined that a \$1 toll at each plaza for two-axle vehicles would be fair to motorists and that the state's finance charges would be paid off by 2027, which coincides with the last payment of the bond.

E-Z Pass

The Department of Transportation encourages all motorists to consider E-ZPass. E-ZPass is a quick and convenient electronic toll collection system. It enables motorists to save time and money, and it eliminates the hassle of digging out a wallet or fumbling with coins at toll plazas and exit ramp toll

booths. E-ZPass electronically deducts the toll from a prepaid account as the vehicle is driven through an E-ZPass lane at about 10 miles an hour. At the technologically advanced E-ZPass lanes at the Biddles Corner toll plaza, the tolls for motorists with E-ZPass can actually be deducted while they drive through the E-ZPass lanes at the highway speed limit. Only three other states (California, Colorado and Illinois) currently have high-tech highway-speed electronic toll collection similar to Biddles Corner.

Much more than just a convenience, E-ZPass also provides for an automatic discount ranging from 15 to 57 percent at every toll plaza and exit ramp toll booth on SR-1. There is also a special discount for E-ZPass high-occupancy vehicles on SR-1. Motorists and high-occupancy vehicles on I-95 in Delaware can also enjoy the convenience and discounted tolls provided by E-ZPass. Electronic toll collection is now or soon will be available at the Delaware Memorial Bridge and various toll plazas in six states, including the New Jersey Turnpike, Atlantic City Expressway and Garden State Parkway in New Jersey; the Commodore Barry, Walt Whitman, Ben Franklin and Betsy Ross bridges; and other regional highways, bridges and tunnels (discounts vary on the different highways and bridges).

E-ZPass has already proven to be very popular among Delaware motorists. In early December, an average of more than 20 percent of the daily vehicles passing through the Biddles Corner plaza had quickly and conveniently paid their tolls with E-ZPass — that's 4,600 to 5,750 E-ZPass vehicles each day. For more information or applications for E-ZPass, call 1-888-AUTO-TOLL (1-888-288-6866), or visit the E-ZPass website at www.ezpass.com, or visit the Dover and Biddles Corner Toll plazas on SR-1 (the plazas are open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day).

SR-1 is the largest public works project ever undertaken in Delaware history. The entire 40-mile highway from Tybouts Corner to south of Dover Air Force Base will be completed and opened in four short years. SR-1 benefits both long-distance drivers and local commuters by providing for convenient and safe travel through Delaware, and by significantly reducing traffic and congestion on Route 13. SR-1 brings all Delawareans closer to where they work, play and live.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Anne P. Canby is secretary of the Delaware Department of Transportation.